



Good Neighbor Environmental Board

Tenth Report to the President
and Congress of the United States

*Environmental Protection
and Border Security
on the U.S.-Mexico Border*



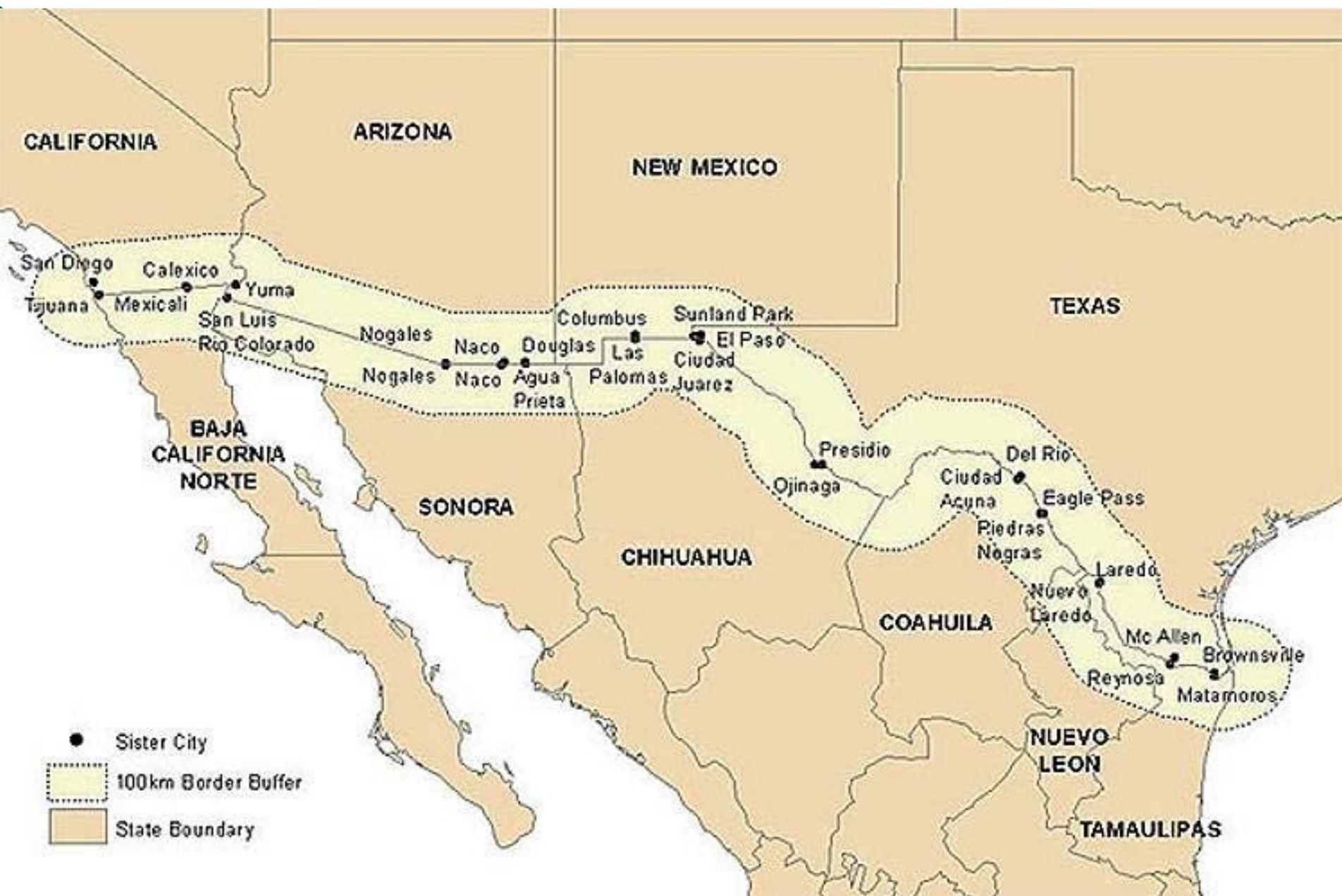
What is the Good Neighbor Environmental Board?

- Independent advisory group
- Advises President and Congress
- Topic: Environmental quality along U.S. border with Mexico
- 3 meetings/year
- Conveys advice via annual reports
- Managed by EPA



GNEB Membership

- 9 federal agencies
- Representatives from border states, private sector, NGOs
- Local Members
 - Carlos Marin, USIBWC
 - Jennifer Montoya, World Wildlife Fund
 - Chris Brown, NMSU
 - Ron Curry, NMED
 - Edward Elbrock, Malpai Borderlands Group



Tenth Report

- **Premise:** Both environmental protection and security are important along the U.S.-Mexico border.
- Undocumented migrants and smugglers crossing in large numbers, along with related enforcement and security actions, can damage the environment.
- In some cases, tighter security at the border can help protect the environment.
- Environmental and security agencies already are cooperating, but more can be done.
- Board looked at two broad areas
 - Undocumented Human Crossings in Rural Areas
 - Hazardous Materials Crossings at Urban Ports

Undocumented Human Crossings in Rural Stretches

- 1990s saw increased undocumented migration and increased enforcement
- Mixed environmental results:
 - Negative results: trash from crossers, vehicle tire ruts, erosion from security work
 - Positive results: new barriers provided more protection for sensitive ecosystems

Key Findings and Recommendations

- **Undocumented Human Crossings** - To address problems associated with unauthorized flows of people across rural areas of the U.S.-Mexico border, and also continue to protect the environmental quality of the region, the GNEB recommends:
 - Strengthen communication and collaboration between security agencies and environmental protection agencies, including land management agencies on both sides of the border.
 - Strategically employ a mix of technology and personnel to meet the security and environmental needs of different sections of the border region.

Challenges and Next Steps

Undocumented Human Crossings

Challenge: Roads and foot trails caused by migrants, smugglers, and U.S. interdiction agencies damage wildlife and ecosystems

Next Steps:

- Use technology and vehicle barriers rather than new roads
- Identify sensitive habitat and minimize environmental impacts there
- Strengthen communication and outreach with the public, especially for environmental concerns
- Establish a federal office to address border security and the environment



Challenges and Next Steps

Undocumented Human Crossings



Trails created by migrants/smugglers

Challenges and Next Steps

Undocumented Human Crossings

- **Challenge:** Lack of collaboration across agencies with security, land management, and environmental protection missions
- **Next Steps:**
 - Establish an interagency task force to develop plans and establish mutual goals regarding law enforcement changes that would affect federal lands
 - Federal government should identify communications gaps and place liaison personnel in border states

Challenges and Next Steps

Undocumented Human Crossings

Challenge: Trash and other waste left by migrants, smugglers

- **Next Steps:**

- Provide federal government support to address sanitation and solid waste issues





Challenges and Next Steps

Undocumented Human Crossings

- **Challenge:** Impenetrable fences may present significant negative consequences to wildlife and the environment
- **Next Steps:**
 - Hold a national conference on fencing technology, develop recommendations for prototype fences that meet security goals while minimizing environmental damage
 - Continue to ensure that USIBWC has the opportunity to review proposed infrastructure to provide advice on ways to minimize negative transboundary impacts such as erosion or flooding



Challenges and Next Steps

Undocumented Human Crossings



USIBWC Concerns:

- Infrastructure cannot obstruct or deflect the normal or flood flows of the Rio Grande or Colorado River
 - Potential flood risk
 - Alters the international boundary
- Ensure that infrastructure is built in the U.S. with a setback requirement
- Access to boundary monuments
- Stormwater concerns on the land boundary

Hazardous Materials Shipments Through Urban Crossings

- Flow of hazardous materials (hazmat) through ports of entry is necessary for trade and prosperity
 - Trucks
 - Railroads
- Tracking of hazmat in border region and across ports of entry is inadequate
- Hazmat presents security and environmental risks
- Emergency response at and near border often is insufficient



Key Findings and Recommendations

- **Hazardous Materials Crossings** - To provide safety and security at ports of entry and beyond, as well as environmental protection from risks associated with the transborder flow of hazardous materials, the Board recommends:
 - At ports of entry, increase the number of hazmat inspectors and establish specific sites and hours for hazmat vehicles.
 - Beyond ports of entry, resolve liability issues for cross-border emergency responders and provide targeted support that reflects the needs of border communities within the larger national strategic plan.

Key Findings and Recommendations

- Hazardous Materials Crossings
 - Establish radio frequency identification to track hazardous waste shipments
 - Strengthen communication and collaboration among security and environmental protection personnel at ports of entry
 - Consider the needs of smaller communities for technology and funding



Tenth Report: Projects and Partnerships

- Report provides examples of projects that:
 - Balance the needs of border security and environmental protection
 - In rural areas, protect the environment while addressing unauthorized flows of people
 - At busy border crossings, provide safety and security, including effective transborder systems for responding to emergencies



Projects and Partnerships

- U.S./Mexico Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Framework
- USDA Douglas-Agua Prieta stormwater partnership
- BLM's Southern Arizona Project – clean-up of solid waste left by border crossers



Eleventh Report

- **Topic:** Natural Hazards and the Environment at U.S.-Mexico Border
- Report to be released March 2008
- Addresses flood issues in U.S.-Mexico border region, among other hazards

For More Information



<http://www.epa.gov/ocem/gneb/>

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